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SUBJECT: BUSINESS EXECUTIVES FOR NATIONAL SECURITY MEET
WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Classified By: DCM WAYNE BUSH, REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

11. (C) Summary: On September 14, the thirteen member Business Executives for National Security (BENS) group met with Abdallah Saledine Tazi, Director of American Affairs, Wassane Zailachi, Chief of the North America, Mexico and Central America Division, Karim Halim, Counselor in the Directorate of Bilateral Relations, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In a separate meeting, BENS also met with Adil Douiri Minister of Tourism, and Rachid Talbi Alami, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs. The BENS group was accompanied by DAO, Poloff (note taker) and Econoff (note taker). The group was particularly interested in the government of Morocco's (GOM) multi-dimensional strategy for combating terrorism. The members of the GOM discussed the economic and social development in the country as the primary means through which extremist activities can be curtailed. End Summary.

12. (U) Participants:

Members of the BENS group

General Charles G. Boyd, USAF, Ret. Head of Delegation and former EUCOM DCDR
Stanley A. Weiss, Chairman of American Premier, Inc.
Eric K. Fanning, Executive Vice President, BENS
Mark Newman, President and CEO of DRS Technologies, Inc
Donald V. Smith, Houlihan Lokey Howard & Zukin
Robert S. Cohn, founder of Octel Communications Corporation
Alfred G. Goldstein, President AG Associates
Frank W. Jenkins, Senior Vice President of Strategies Business Unit
Kenneth Moscow, President, American Venture Corporation
Stephen J. Shapiro, Managing Partner, The Buckingham Hotel
Major General Frank J. Grass, EUCOM Escort Officer, Director of Mobilization and Reserves Component Affairs

Government of Morocco

Rachid Talbi Alami, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs
Adil Douiri, Minister of Tourism
Abdallah Saledine Tazi, Director of American Affairs
Wassane Zailachi, Director North America, Mexico and Central America
Karim Halim, Counselor for Bi-lateral Affairs and Counterterrorism

Background

¶3. (C) Boyd described BENS as a group of volunteer business people who look at the economic environment within the context of national security without the intention of conducting any business. Members of BENS travel to places where there are security concerns to broaden the members' understanding of specific regions and to assist in shaping US opinion, according to Boyd. Since 2004, when BENS last visited Morocco, members have visited Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Jordan, Syria, North African countries and the Caspian basin area. In particular, Boyd said, BENS is interested in areas where there are hydrocarbons and where instability may occur.

The Office of the Prime Minister's View

¶4. (C) Minister of Tourism Adil Douiri and Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Rachid Talbi Alami hosted BENS members at the Office of the Prime Minister to discuss the GOM's "multi-phase" strategy for combating terrorism. Douiri explained that short-term efforts included Ministry of Interior and intelligence activities, medium-term plans were focused on increasing economic growth, and long-term operations emphasized education.

¶5. (C) Douiri acknowledged that Morocco's problems with terrorism were homegrown and often entailed three stages of "brainwashing." First, he said, the importance of religion was elevated among recruits, then support for foreign conflicts, which were "fertile breeding grounds" for

terrorism, such as Iraq. Finally, the process of rationalization was introduced to encourage the introduction of the same or similar types of "battle" into Morocco. Douiri emphasized that this only involved a small number of people, was not limited to the poor, and was not caused by local religious schools. He listed numerous statistics to demonstrate that Morocco's economy had been improving for several years, although regional disparities exist, implying that efforts to fight terrorism were working.

¶6. (C) Douiri said the GOM paid the salaries of imams to help show its support for mosques, and therefore reduce the chances of Imams feeling neglected, which might lead to their radicalization. He added that salaries had recently been increased and that the GOM had begun to offer training courses for imams. In addition, he said that the Ministry of Islamic Affairs was working to increase its influence in mosques, especially to ensure that the Friday sermons were constructive. The Ministry of Education is also working to ensure that school books give a balanced message regarding religion, according to Douiri. The BENS members were impressed by the GOM's efforts, but expressed concern that some Arab satellite television channels could be a destabilizing influence in Morocco.

¶7. (C) BENS was concerned about the "role the GOM plays in de-radicalizing extremists. Tazi said that the GOM cooperates with all of its allies to fight terrorism and note that linking security and business issues had not been raised. Halim informed the BENS group that the GOM is signatory to thirteen UN conventions relating to terrorism. He also said that the GOM fights terrorism in a multi-dimensional manner, emphasizing the king's reform agenda and the socio-economic development of the country as ways to counter extremist ideology. Tazi noted that the general Moroccan population is beginning to understand that the reduction of poverty is one way of eliminating the spread of extremist ideas. Tazi identified terrorists as being from "outside Morocco"; he explained that expatriate

Moroccans are recruited when they are abroad and that the
GOM does not think of them as Moroccans.

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